AN 3.21 — Samiddha Sutta (The Venerable Saviṭṭha)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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Text

AN III

Suttas 21-31

Puggala Vagga “The Section on People”

21. Samiddha Sutta (The Venerable Saviṭṭha) This is what I personally heard.

At one time, The Blessed One was staying at Anāthapiṇḍika’s Monastery in Jeta’s Grove, near the city of Sāvatthī, when both the Venerable Saviṭṭha and the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, in approaching the Venerable Sāriputta, exchanged courteous greetings and sat down to one side. Then, the Venerable Sāriputta spoke these words, while addressing the Venerable Saviṭṭha:

“Friend Saviṭṭha, there are these three types of beings found in existence. What three?

“Here, there is the body-witness; the one attained to view; and the one liberated through faith.

These are the three types of beings found in existence.

“Now, out of these three, which one do you consider to be the one that stands out as the most excellent?”

“Friend Sāriputta, out of those three types of beings, I consider the one liberated through faith to be the most excellent. And for what reason?

“It is because this person’s faculty of faith is supreme.”

At this point, the Venerable Sāriputta turned to the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, and said:

“Friend Koṭṭhita, there are these three types of beings found in existence. What three?

“Here, there is the body-witness; the one attained to view; and the one liberated through faith.

These are the three types of beings found in existence.

“Now, out of these three, which one do you consider to be the one that stands out as the most excellent?”

“Friend Sāriputta, out of those three types of beings, I consider the body-witness to be the most excellent. And for what reason?

“It is because this person’s faculty of collected stability of mind (samādhi) is supreme.”

Then, turning to the Venerable Sāriputta, the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita said:

“Friend Sāriputta, there are these three types of beings found in existence. What three?

“Here, there is the body-witness; the one attained to view; and the one liberated through faith.

These are the three types of beings found in existence.

“Now Friend, out of these three, which one would you consider to be the one that stands out as the most excellent?”

“Friend Koṭṭhita, out of those three types of beings, I consider the one attained to View to be the most excellent. And for what reason?

“It is because this person’s faculty of wisdom is supreme.”

At this, turning to the Venerable Saviṭṭha and the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, the Venerable Sāriputta said to them:

“Friends, we each have given our ideal choice and also explained the reason behind it. Let us go and approach The Blessed Lord and report this matter to Him. This way, as He explains it to us, so should we remember and apply it in our practice.”

“Yes, friend,” replied the Venerable Saviṭṭha and the Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita, and together with Venerable Sāriputta, all three of them went and approached The Blessed One and after paying homage to Him, they sat to one side.

Then, the Venerable Sāriputta related to The Blessed One the entire conversation held earlier between himself and his two fellow Bhikkhus.

After this, The Blessed One said:

“Sāriputta, it is not easy to make a clear distinction in regards to this matter, whereby one may make the conclusion that out of these three, only this type of person is the most excellent.

“And why is this the case?

“It is because a person who is liberated through faith can be practicing in a way that will surely lead him to Arahanthood, while another person who is a body-witness, and someone else who has attained to View are merely once-returners or non-returners, without advancing any further.

“Therefore, Sāriputta, it is not easy to make a clear distinction in regards to this matter, whereby one may make the conclusion that out of these three, only this type of person is the most excellent.

“Because, similarly, some person who is a body-witness can be practicing in a way that will surely lead him to Arahanthood, while another person who is liberated through faith and someone else who has attained to View are merely once-returners or non-returners, without advancing any further.

“Therefore, Sāriputta, it is not easy to make a clear distinction in regards to this matter, whereby one may make the conclusion that out of these three, only this type of person is the most excellent.

“Because, similarly, yet another person who has attained to View can be practicing in a way that will surely lead him to Arahanthood, while some other person who is liberated through faith and another who is a body-witness are merely once-returners or non-returners, without advancing any further.

“Therefore, Sāriputta, it is not easy to make a clear distinction in regards to this matter, whereby one may make the conclusion that out of these three, only this type of person is the most excellent.”